

Chapter 5: November 10: “Hell Jolted Loose”

- The Committee of Twenty-Five met with the Committee of Colored Citizens (CCC) on the evening of November 9 to make demands of the African American community, primarily the removal of Manly, who left town that day because he was informed of the dangers to his life if he stayed. The CCC was to provide a reply by 7:30 A.M. on the tenth to Alfred M. Waddell. The reply did not arrive by the specified time, and Waddell proceeded to the Wilmington Light Infantry (WLI) armory.
- Waddell met a crowd of men at the armory at 8:00 A.M. and led a march to the *Record* printing offices near the corner of Seventh and Nun. The *Record* offices were destroyed by a mob numbering as many as 2,000 whites who then returned to the armory.
- Word of the fire at the press spread, and blacks working at James Sprunt’s cotton compress quit work and clustered at the waterfront as crowds of armed whites pressed for the crowd to disperse. Sprunt and other whites worked to protect the blacks and calm the whites, avoiding bloodshed at the compress.
- Violence broke out at the intersection of Fourth and Harnett when groups of blacks and whites argued with each other from opposing corners. Both sides claimed the first shot was fired by the other with two “witnesses” providing opposing testimony.
- After the first shots were fired, the governor called out the WLI, who marched into Brooklyn to calm the riot. They participated in skirmishes and killed several black men at Manhattan Park and elsewhere.
- The WLI and the Naval Reserves operated two rapid-fire guns in the city. The guns were used to intimidate and terrorize both blacks and whites before the day was over. Another rapid fire gun was brought to the city by members of the Kinston Naval Reserves, who joined the WLI and other State Guard units in the city to press for peace at the behest of the governor.
- Several black men were identified as killed or wounded in sporadic skirmishes throughout the day. Some black men were found and taken to the hospital on the eleventh. Several men died from their wounds in the days following the riot. One white man was critically wounded, a few other whites were also wounded, but there were no white casualties.
- During the riot, members of Waddell’s Committee of Twenty-Five, George Rountree, John D. Bellamy, and others worked to facilitate a coup d’etat to overthrow the Republican mayor, Board of Aldermen, and chief of police. By 4:00 P.M., the elected officials were resigning and being replaced by men selected by the Committee of Twenty-Five. The newly placed Board of Aldermen elected Waddell mayor.